

## **SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT FAMILY COURT SERVICES REPORT**

Dear CFCC Committee Members,

The following information and requests are submitted for your consideration:

### **A. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

In March of 2008, Denise M. Villa, LMSW was hired as the new Family Court Coordinator for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District. Currently, the program is undergoing a transition and adopting a Case Management/Case Coordination Model. This model tracks cases at the inception or from a certain triggering event and identifies and implements an appropriate case track and then assists with coordinating the provision of court based and other services to the parties and their children. The goals of this model are: (1) to assist the courts and families in expeditiously reaching legally appropriate and practically workable resolutions in cases involving children. (2) The development of intake procedures that provide the court and the parties with accurate and complete information about the entire family for better decision making. (3) To assist with strengthening and balancing the role of the court to fairly adjudicate and manage cases using a problem solving approach that focuses on identifying the needs of the family and promotes long term resolution. (4) Develop impact and outcome measures to test and evaluate the differentiated case management tracks and case coordination models as they relate to the court and the families.

#### **1. Grant Development**

i. FCS was awarded \$5,000 from the Inland Community Foundation-Florence Wasmer Children & Families grant. A parenting resource library for parents and children who are in conflict is at the end of completion and the foundation assisted with the project start up costs to include funding library resources and equipment. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District is respectfully asking for an additional \$750 per year to acquire updated videos and books for the resource library.

ii. A second grant from the Inland Community Foundation-Florence Wasmer Children & Families Grant was awarded for an additional \$5,000. This grant is being used to bring the Focus on the Children Class in house. The equipment has been purchased and the curriculum is near completion.

2. Provider Resources: In an effort to improve services for children and families in the courts, FCS continues to build community relationships with local service providers. The Center for New Directions is working on a curriculum to provide an additional intensive co-parenting class. Service providers in the outlying counties continue to provide for supervised visitation. There are currently eight supervised visitation centers in the 2nd Judicial District and 12 access providers trained by the Idaho Supreme Court. FCS is currently recruiting professionals interested in providing mediation services. While there are a number of individuals interested in becoming certified mediators, training must be accessed out of area.

### **B. SUPERVISED VISITATION**

This FCS Coordinator had the opportunity to participate in the supervised visitation training hosted by the Idaho Supreme Court in the Fall of 2007. As a result, the 2<sup>nd</sup> District now has a pool of qualified supervisors in all counties for this needed service.

### **C. FOCUS ON CHILDREN**

Currently the Focus on Children class is being contracted out through the Center for New Directions. This class is the mandatory divorce orientation program in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District. Our class is currently two hours long and includes an optional children's program for children at no extra cost. We are now looking to bring the Focus on Children Class in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District in house. The project is near completion and the goal is to begin in August 2008.

### **D. 2<sup>nd</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT COMMUNITY COURT COLLABORATIVE**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District formed the Community Court Collaborative [CCC] in the fall of 2007. The Community Court Collaboration was formed to bring together the necessary partners to help families tackle the complex issues of domestic violence and supervised visitation. A critical component of this collaboration is sharing promising practices, safety, and discussing trends in improving well being for children and families in the courts. FCS was able to approach local vendors such as Costco, Safeway, Rosauers, Albertsons, and Wal-Mart who graciously donated food items for hosting the CCC. We have hosted three meetings thus far and had many stakeholders in attendance to include: The Judiciary, supervised visitation providers, Department of Health & Welfare, President of the local Bar Association, local attorneys', representatives from Legal Aid, Domestic Violence agencies, Commissioners, the Coeur d'Alene and Nez Perce Tribes, local and government representatives.

### **E. PARENTING ACCESS SCHEDULES**

During the last year, the Family Court Services has worked with many families who had indicated problems related to access and visitation. For those who are court ordered to meet with FCS, their access and visitation needs are assessed and a plan for developmental appropriate visitation is established and filed with the court. Clients are also provided with information regarding other services coordinated through Family Court Services, such as the directed co-parenting class, Focus on Children Class and supervised visitation/exchange programs. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial FCS has had the opportunity to provide mediation services to many low income families at no cost to the family.

### **F. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION SCREENINGS**

As the district continues to access FCS, a greater demand falls upon the Coordinator. The Coordinator continues to provide direct services to many families and work on developing more resources. Moving to a case management model that includes a condensed Case Management Screening Report may help in reducing the time spent on comprehensive report writing. This will allow the Coordinator to identify high conflict cases early and expeditiously move the cases toward timely resolutions. This will assist with keeping cases out of court and allow FCS to serve more families.

### **G. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Since beginning the position, the Coordinator has attended several trainings and conferences. The Coordinator attended the Family Court Service Training in Boise and the AFCC Conference in Vancouver, BC. Both the training and the conference were extremely beneficial in providing the new coordinator with training and information that will assist in making the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District Family Court Service Program a success.

### **H. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

FCS Coordinator is currently recruiting additional mediators for the 2<sup>nd</sup> District as there are only 2 mediators on the Idaho Supreme Court Roster in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District. The FCS Coordinator is working toward getting a trainer to come to the area to provide training. With this limited

number of mediators, it will require the Coordinator to mediate many of the cases and limit the time spent on other necessary tasks. Building the mediator list is imperative for the program to be successful. There are approximately 7 individuals interested in attending the required 60 hour training to become a certified mediator, but they do not have the means to pay for the training and pay for the travel to attend such training. It is respectfully requested that the CFCC consider funding an additional \$3,000 for a professional trainer to come to the 2<sup>nd</sup> District and provide the training needed to meet this need.

#### **I. ADDITIONAL CO-PARENTING EDUCATION**

The Center for New Directions has agreed to develop an extended Co-Parent Education Program that will provide parents with additional alternatives for settling high conflict cases. This model will be key to settling high conflict cases using a “Child Centered Model” and emphasizing that the parents have a responsibility to their children. These models suggest that this may be accomplished through coaching and education. Participants in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial will include parents, grandparents, step-parents and other individuals who have a direct role in care giving of the children in the dispute. Throughout the program, participants are reminded that the focus should remain on the needs of the children.

#### **J. FUNDING REQUEST**

The Second Judicial District is requesting an additional \$10,000 to meet their program goals for additional direct services in 2008 and 2009 fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted,

*DENISE M. VILLA, LMSW*

2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Family Court Services Coordinator